

Chapter Topic: Community Engagement and Collaboration

Community Vision Statement

(Overall Future Outcome Envisioned for this Chapter's Topic)

- Recognizing the need for inclusive community engagement processes as well as to effectively seek input from the full community, the City and its partners will use new and evolving strategies to directly seek feedback from all community members, particularly those who face the greatest challenges to participation and those who are most impacted by potential decisions.
- Community engagement in Charlottesville will include both ongoing communication about civic life and opportunities to participate in public processes and decision-making.
- The City will emphasize and demonstrate the importance of community involvement by facilitating transparent, accessible, and respectful input opportunities, and by effectively communicating the ways in which community input will be considered in, and will inform, decision-making.
- The City will widely and proactively share information about opportunities and events, welcoming all residents into planning and decision-making processes while ensuring that they understand the process and how the outcome could potentially impact their lives.
- The City will utilize a variety of best practices in community engagement and seek out information-sharing partnerships with local organizations.
- City-appointed boards, commissions, and committees will be both representative of and sensitive to Charlottesville's diversity and range of perspectives, and will provide and encourage opportunities for informed participation by interested community members.

Overview of Chapter Goals

(Specific outcomes related to achieving the Community Vision)

Goal 1. Public Education and Awareness: Empower community members by providing and actively sharing the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.

Goal 2. Inclusive Processes: Seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a process or decision.

Goal 3. Transparent Procedures: Establish and maintain transparent planning processes.

Goal 4. Effective Engagement: Define and evolve a clear process and strategies for how the City gathers input and shares information with all residents.

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1. Public Education and Awareness: Empower community members by providing and actively sharing the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.

Related Guiding Principle(s):

- *Local & Regional Collaboration, Equity & Opportunity*

Measures of Progress:

- *# (or %) of people engaged in public education activities related to planning (including by Neighborhood Planning Area, by income, race, and other demographics to ensure that participants are representative of overall city demographics)*

Strategy 1.1 *Provide general educational resources and training opportunities for residents to land use, transportation, housing, and other planning issues, and the impact that planning and projects in these areas can have on individuals and communities.*

Sub-strategies:

- Provide project-specific educational resources and training, if needed.
- Coordinate outreach of educational materials in a variety of ways.

Implementation Notes and Source of Strategy:

- Potential Implementation Lead & Partners: Neighborhood Development Services (NDS), Planning Commission, City Council, Community Representatives, Communications, Neighborhood Associations
- Timeframe: 1-2 years; Update general resources annually
- Source: Staff, PLACE Committee memorandum, *Cville Plans Together* process

Goal 2. Inclusive Processes: Seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a process or decision.

Related Guiding Principle(s):

- *Local & Regional Collaboration, Equity & Opportunity, Community Culture & Unity*

Measures of Progress:

- *# (or %) of people engaged in planning processes (including by Neighborhood Planning Area, by income, race, and other demographics to ensure that participants are representative of overall city demographics)*

Strategy 2.1 *Establish and use guidelines and metrics to ensure inclusive community engagement in City-led processes.*

Implementation Notes and Source of Strategy:

- Potential Implementation Lead & Partners: NDS, City Council, Planning Commission, Community Representatives, Communications
- Timeframe: 1-2 years; update guidelines annually
- Source: Staff, *Cville Plans Together* process

Sub-strategies:

- Ensure that all community members are welcomed and encouraged to share their

views, regardless of ethnicity, race, immigration status, age, socio-economic status, cultural background, ability, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

- Ensure that those who have the potential to be, or have historically been, adversely affected by decisions are adequately represented. Intentional, deliberate efforts should be undertaken to ensure that these populations are not only informed, but also play an active role in peer-to-peer communication and any advisory or leadership community positions (e.g., Steering or Advisory Committees) that may arise.

Strategy 2.2 *Foster ongoing communication and partnerships with residents, Neighborhood Associations, businesses, boards, commissions, UVA, Albemarle County, etc. to ensure all stakeholders are involved in planning processes and decision-making.*

Sub-strategy:

- Consider providing meeting facilitation training and/or training on other community outreach tools and tactics to interested residents across the city in order to build up local neighborhood capacity and strengthen partnerships between residents and City government.

Implementation Notes and Source of Strategy:

- Potential Implementation Lead & Partners: NDS, Communications, Planning Commission, City Council, Neighborhood Associations
- Timeframe: Ongoing
- Source: Staff

Goal 3. Transparent Procedures: Establish and maintain transparent planning processes.

Related Guiding Principle(s):

- *Local & Regional Collaboration, Equity & Opportunity*

Measures of Progress:

- *% active and completed (approved) projects with data available on the Charlottesville website*
- *Engagement portal activity*
- *# of people or % of population (by neighborhood) subscribed to the City's email listserv*

Strategy 3.1 *Study options for a centralized community engagement web portal and feedback tool to facilitate engagement on all community projects, plan reviews, etc., and standardize the feedback process. Consider a range of interactive tools with a focus on those that are easy to understand and can easily be paired with in-person engagement for those without internet access.*

Implementation Notes and Source of Strategy:

- Potential Implementation Lead & Partners: Information Technology, Communications, NDS
- Timeframe: Immediate (within 1 year)
- Source: *Cville Plans Together* process

Strategy 3.2 *Provide a clear outline at the start of all planning and decision-making processes, to clarify the timeline and any opportunities for residents to be involved in all steps of decision-making processes from initial data gathering to alternatives development to decision-making to implementation and evaluation.*

Implementation Notes and Source of Strategy:

- Potential Implementation Lead & Partners: NDS, Planning Commission, City Council
- Timeframe: Immediate (within 1 year)
- Source: Staff, *Cville Plans Together* process

Strategy 3.3 When possible, make data collected and generated by the City open and available to the public.

Implementation Notes and Source of Strategy:

- Potential Implementation Lead & Partners: Information Technology, Communications, NDS
- Timeframe: Ongoing
- Source: Staff

Strategy 3.4 Regularly report on implementation progress for the Comprehensive Plans, Small Area Plans, and other major planning efforts.

Implementation Notes and Source of Strategy:

- Potential Implementation Lead & Partners: NDS, City Council, Planning Commission
- Timeframe: Ongoing
- Source: Staff

Goal 4. Effective Engagement: Define and evolve a clear process and strategies for how the City gathers input and shares information with all residents.

Related Guiding Principle(s):

- *Local & Regional Collaboration, Equity & Opportunity*

Measures of Progress:

- *Identification of staff Community Engagement lead(s)*
- *% of City processes with community engagement plans shared and utilized*
- *Annual assessment of engagement strategies and outcomes*

Strategy 4.1 Evaluate the need for a new Community Engagement staff position or group within NDS, to lead relationship management across stakeholders and to ensure ensuring a consistent level of effective community engagement.

Implementation Notes and Source of Strategy:

- Potential Implementation Lead & Partners: NDS, City Council, City Manager's Office, Communications Department
- Timeframe: 1-2 years
- Source: *Cville Plans Together* process

Strategy 4.2 Develop and share standard, defined processes for how community input will be gathered through constructive means and then applied to land use and development- related decisions at various levels of City decision-making.

Sub-strategies:

- Consider opportunities to build community leadership development through the planning process, particularly for disadvantaged or underrepresented communities.
- Utilize a variety of engagement locations/strategies (e.g., Online tools,

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phone hotline, tabling, community meetings, notices to Neighborhood Leaders, community agencies, etc.).

- Make participation accessible, convenient, attractive, and easy in order to maximize community involvement. Consider hosting meetings at community-based venues, and at a wide range of times to allow for various members of the community to access.
- Include both individual and group participation opportunities.
- Provide information in multiple languages.
- Hold meetings in locations accessible by public transportation.
- Consider hosting meetings in community-based venues, virtually and in-person, and at a wide range of times to allow for various members of the community to access. Consider opportunities to compensate residents for participation.
- Provide food and childcare at meetings, when possible.

- Provide a timeline for all community input for each effort.

Implementation Notes and Source of Strategy:

- Potential Implementation Lead & Partners: NDS, Communications, Planning Commission, City Council, City Manager's Office
- Timeframe: 1-2 years
- Source: Staff, PLACE Committee memorandum, *Cville Plans Together* process

Strategy 4.3 Routinely review community engagement processes and make necessary changes to improve effectiveness.

Implementation Notes and Source of Strategy:

- Potential Implementation Lead & Partners: NDS, Planning Commission, Communications
- Timeframe: 2-3 years and then annually
- Source: Staff

Strategy 4.4 Update methods of communication and interaction with the community as technology changes and new methods become available.

Implementation Notes and Source of Strategy:

- Potential Implementation Lead & Partners: NDS, Information Technology, Communications Department
- Timeframe: 2-3 years and then annually
- Source: Staff

Strategy 4.5 Build on previous efforts to study and pilot options for participatory decision-making in city processes, such as budgeting. Ensure that access is addressed for those with a lack of internet access.

Implementation Notes and Source of Strategy:

- Potential Implementation Lead & Partners: City Council, Budget Department, UVA (potential partner)
- Timeframe: 1-2 years
- Source: *Cville Plans Together* process